

# 7 km highway section is open

08 June 2016

Part of the highway - the 7-kilometer section of 12-kilometer Agara-Upper Osiauri road was opened. The event was attended by the Prime Minister, Giorgi Kvirikashvili, Regional Development and Infrastructure Minister of Georgia, Nodar Javakhishvili, Deputy of Roads Department of Georgia, Giorgi Seturidze, Active Governor of Shida Kartli, Ioseb Okromelidze and World Bank Regional Director in South Caucasus Mecry Tembon.

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In his speech Giorgi Kvirikashvili elaborated on the importance of the new transport network construction and on behalf of the government thanked the World Bank and other international financial institutions for participation in these projects. Pursuant to the Prime Minister, the high number of tourists that currently visit Georgia will be able to enjoy high-speed highway.

"I am very glad that today we have opened yet another section of this road - this is the largest part of Agara- Osiauri section. I am glad that this is happening today, because the large number of tourists that currently visit Georgia and our citizens as well as guests will be able enjoy this way. Under the umbrella of large-scale "Check in Georgia" project, a concert in Batumi is scheduled today and this road is already open for travelling, "- Prime Minister noted.

The Prime Minister discussed the Government's ambitious plan of reforms and activities aimed at spatial development that are prescribed by the four-point plan. According to him, the transport network construction is one of the cornerstones of the new model of spatial development.

According to Giorgi Kvirikashvili, the Government plans to complete key transport arteries by the end of 2020.

"We plan to open a few more important sections this year, including Rikoti or Chumateleti-Argveta portion of the road. Planning process has already begun most likely the real construction works will be launched in the near future. Furthermore, by the end of 2020 (and we genuinely did not plan it that way), we intend to have finalized the construction process of major roads of Georgia. By this time, as you may know, the first phase of Anaklia port will be completed and main Eastern-Western and Northern-Southern highways will also be completed. By said time, the roads linking major tourist areas including Svaneti road and its tunnels as well as Kutaisi-Abastumani highway will also be completed. We have to turn Kutaisi into the internal hub of Georgia that will connect all points. We also plan elaborate major new road projects. This year we will start the design of Mountaneous Tusheti road, since it has very versatile designation in terms of security, in terms of our country's most important cultural heritage. We are planning to build a new road thus ensuring regional development of Racha region - the highway will connect Gomi and Racha. All this will bring a very important incentive to the development of Georgia, "- the Prime Minister said.

Giorgi Kvirikashvili expressed hope that the Government will be actively involved in projects planned by the private sector, and Georgia will actually be able to fulfill its one of the very important functions - the role of the component of the Silk Road project. "Involvement of the international financial institutions carries particular significance, and on behalf of the Government of Georgia I would like to thank the

World Bank, other institutions who are involved in this important project." Representatives of the "Black Sea Group" company are present here, and I would also like to thank them for the highest quality of performed work. Overall, I have to say that private sector involvement shall be higher in such projects. Currently we are working on designs of many projects simultaneously and we are conducting number of preliminary studies. The largest portion of the work will be finalized by the first quarter of the next year and many projects will be launched. This is essential to ensure that Georgia fully performs its function of one of the most important components of the Silk Road project "- Giorgi Kvirikashvili said.

The Prime Minister also congratulated the local residents on the opening of the road. According to him, the highway will perform an important role in economic development of the region

"I also want to congratulate the local residents. More than 500 local employees are employed in the construction works of this section. This is very important for the local community, since people are able to provide for their families without leaving their home. This is very important to us. Of course, our efforts are aimed at constructing traffic arteries as well as development of our regions and increasing the transit function of the country that is crucial for the economic prosperity of our nation. Once again, congratulations and I truly believe that we will give new development impetus to Georgia, "- the Prime Minister said.

Agara-Upper Osiauri section is part of the so-called "Silk Belt" and represents an integral hub of travelling from Europe to Asia through China. The 7-kilometer section of 12-kilometer Agara-Upper Osiauri road was opened. The remaining 5 kilometers of the work will be completed by the end of the year. The project is being implemented in line with European standards, which imply 4 lanes of concrete road, 2 transport units, 2 parallel bridges and 2 viaducts. Construction works employ 500 people.

The opening ceremony was attended by the Minister of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia, Nodar Javakhishvili and the World Bank Regional Director for the South Caucasus Mercy Tembon.